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European Coaches Associations Map 2020 Presence and Impact

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Executive Summary

Not so long ago access to sport coaching was the prerogative of only those in performance sport. Nowadays, however, coaches work with a broad array of populations including children, young people, adults and senior citizens. The recognition of the role of the coach in 21st century society has therefore increased substantially in recent years (Council of the European Union, 2017; 2020). Nonetheless, there is still much to be done to maximise the capacity of the sport coaching system in the EU to fulfil its promise. Improvement to coaches' representation and status is a central element in this process.

CoachForce21 (CF21) is a three-year Erasmus+ co-funded project led by Leeds Beckett University (UK) and the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) with seven project partners: Trainerakademie Köln (Germany), Czech Olympic Committee (Czech Republic), Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary), Polish Institute of Sport (Poland), Treinadores Portugal (Portugal), Professional Coaches of Finland (Finland) and the Hellenic Federation of Sports Coaches and Trainers (Greece).

CF21 aims to enhance the role, responsibility, and status of sport coaches in 21st century Europe. The EU Coaching Landscape Baseline Report 2020 provides a comprehensive state of the nation analysis of the sport coaching system in the EU. It highlights some positive trends as well as several areas for improvement. The full report can be accessed from www.coachforce.eu. The European Coaches' Associations Map looks to add to this by mapping the presence and impact of Coaches' Associations throughout the member states.

The European Coaches' Associations Map gathers data from 17 of the member states in areas pertaining to coaching workforce representation. It seeks to provide updated data and determine coach representation trends by comparing it to data gathered in the previous CoachNet project (Duffy et. al., 2013). The results and conclusions that stem from this map will provide valuable information as to what elements of the system appear to have made substantial progress and which require further attention.

Overall, it can be concluded that Coaches' Associations are present in a majority of European countries (77%). These associations have varying formats and roles determined by their mission and vision which affects the impact they have on coaches. Out of the 17 surveyed countries, 29% of them have single-sport associations, 24% have multi-sport associations and another 24% have both types present. The remaining 23% have no record of Coaches' Associations.

With regards to the associations' role, 71% of Coaches' Associations stated having multiple roles, while only 29% of associations were dedicated exclusively to a single role. When analysing specifically the role of each association, 57% stated their main role as being advocacy and representation of coaches, while 29% focused on education.

However, when respondents were asked about the mission and vision of the Coaches' Associations present in their countries, less than half of them (43%) were able to express it clearly. In fact, analysis of the interviews and surveys allowed the researchers to determine a slight overlap between the roles, the vision, and the mission of the associations. Development is stated as the main mission and vision of Coaches' Associations (50%) with recognition and support each being mentioned in 29% of Coaches' Associations.

Another important aspect of the survey, albeit a difficult one to determine, is the presence of the Voice of the Coach in each country. A majority of the respondents (76%) stated that the Voice of the Coach is indeed present in their country although answers vary in the way and quality in which this occurs.

Despite these seemingly positive numbers, this research uncovered several contradictions and potential weaknesses that place a question mark on the progress of coaching representation in Europe:

- At times inconsistent and ambiguous answers to certain questions led to apparent contradictions in the data. For instance, the absence of answers from 11 countries might suggest that coaching representation is still not as expanded as initially thought. Furthermore, the lack of data in some Coaches' Associations indicates that data collection in coach representation is still not given sufficient importance.
- In some Coaches' Associations, there is still some clarification to be made regarding the language and translation of concepts. For example, five of the surveyed countries (29%) mention the presence of a coaching union but make specific differences with coaching associations. Likewise, only two countries mention differences between volunteer and professional coaches. It is unclear whether this is due to lack of data, lack of specificity or a translation-related error.
- The data collected regarding the impact of the associations in each country might not be reliable as well. Only seven of the respondents (41%) were able to articulate some form of impact, yet many of these might be considered more akin

to goals, aspirations, and organisational missions rather than demonstrable effects.

- Even though 76% of the countries (n=13) state that the Voice of the Coach does have a presence, five of these countries (29%) mention that that voice is not sufficiently recognized or impactful.

Overall, this research highlights the fact that, even though coach representation appears to be making progress in several countries, there is still considerable margin for improvement across the EU. However, the report also highlights that, as with the Coaching Landscape Baseline Report, there is no single recipe that works the same for every country in Europe and cultural and social contextualisation is necessary.

Although each country's sport system depends on the cultural and historical context, it is unclear whether this also affects Coaches' Associations. Notwithstanding this, findings do suggest that data seems to be more easily and clearly obtained in countries with a strong sport coaching infrastructure in place. In the Coaches' Associations of CoachForce21 more detailed information has been obtained, with a few exceptions, from countries with multi-sport coaching associations. A similar picture was uncovered in the previous CoachNet project (2013).

To facilitate the growth of Coaches' Associations, over the course of the next 18 months, CoachForce21 will put forward a series of development and governance best principles, guidelines, and recommendations. This will help not only enhance the voice of the coach, but also support the recognition and development of sport coaching as a significant and growing occupation in Europe's social landscape.

Introduction - Project CoachForce21

CoachForce21 (CF21) is a three-year Erasmus+ co-funded project led by Leeds Beckett University (UK) and the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) with another seven partners: Trainerakademie Köln (Germany), Czech Olympic Committee (Czech Republic), Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary), Polish Institute of Sport (Poland), Treinadores Portugal (Portugal), Professional Coaches of Finland (Finland) and the Hellenic Federation of Sports Coaches and Trainers (Greece).

CF21 has two main objectives:

1. Strengthening coach representation at national and European level through the provision of guidance and support for existing and developing Coaches' Associations (Coaches' Associations) in the EU
2. Bringing the Voice of the Coach to the fore of the Social Dialogue in Sport to foster Good Governance in the Sector.

To achieve the above, the partners will:

1. Develop a baseline picture of the current coaching landscape across the 27 Member States
2. Map the current impact of Coaches' Associations in the 27 Member States
3. Create guidance tools and resources for current and prospective Coaches' Associations in relation to the convening, governance, relevance and impact of this type of organisations.
4. Effectively engaging with coaches on the frontline, employers (i.e. clubs; local authorities; leisure providers, etc), national and international sporting organisations (i.e., federations) and national and international policy bodies (i.e., government departments; European umbrella bodies).

The European Coaches Associations Map Report 2020 addresses the second of these action points. It follows in the footsteps of projects such as CoachNet (2013) and seeks to paint a detailed picture of the status of Coaches' Associations throughout the EU. As such, it is focused on mapping the different types, roles, and goals of Coaches' Associations to understand the reach and impact of the Voice of the Coach in Europe and to guide future developments in this very important occupational area.

1. Sport Coaching in the European Union

1.1 The Role of the Coach in 21st Century Society

Everyday across the globe, millions of children, young people, adults, and senior citizens engage in sport and physical activity pursuits. For some, participation is mainly about personal wellbeing and enjoyment. For some others it is about challenging their current levels of performance and trying to improve themselves. For a very small minority, sport is about Olympic and professional glory and accolades. The common denominator for many of these experiences is the presence of a coach who guides and supports participants towards their personal goals and objectives. Whilst not so long ago access to sport coaching was the prerogative of only those in performance sport, nowadays, coaches work with a broad array of populations and objectives. The recognition of the role of the coach in 21st century society has therefore increased substantially in recent years (Council of the European Union, 2017; 2020).

However, this recognition alone is not enough to improve the situation of sport coaching. Through its Sport Unit, the European Commission developed the Pledge to Implement Good Governance in European Sport (European Commission, 2016). An important part of this Pledge is to include coaches in all decision-making as key stakeholders in the sector.

One of the ways in which Good Governance has improved, and that directly affects coaches, is through Social Dialogue. Social Dialogue *“refers to the discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions that regularly take place between such social partners as employers and trade unions. Social dialogue covers a wide range of social and work-related issues, and sometimes involves public authorities”* (European Commission, 2016, p. 3).

The value of social dialogue is to include the people who are on the ground, in this Coaches' Associations the coaches, in the discussions regarding policy-making and social well-being, among other things. This bottom-up approach is how coaches are included in the decision-making process as key stakeholders. However, their inclusion and representativeness in the social dialogue at national and European level, as well as their relevance and importance in consolidating Good Governance structures, is still far from optimal (CoachNet, 2013).

Coaches' representation and participation in the decision-making processes is central to success. Over the last decade a number of European projects have focused on developing and improving sport coaching in areas such as coach education, coaching qualifications and coach representation. One of these projects, CoachLearn (2017), developed the European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF; Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a). Relevant to the purpose of project

CoachForce21, the ESCF clearly stated the very important role of coaches' representation (mainly, but not exclusively, through Coaches' Associations) in the creation of successful and inclusive coaching systems.

1.2 A System's View of Sport Coaching

Organisations such as the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) have drawn attention to the need for a wider systems approach to the understanding and improvement of sport coaching. The publication of the International Sport Coaching Framework (ISCF; ICCE, ASOIF and LBU, 2013) signalled a step change in the way this is construed by placing the focus on the identification of the multiple stakeholders of the coaching system in any given country, sport or local context.

This notion has been further explored in the ESCF which adapted the principles of the ISCF and contextualised them to the European landscape. The ESCF defined the coaching system as "the people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context" (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a, p. 15). The notion of a coaching system implies a layered network whereby all parts are interconnected and contribute to the outcomes of the whole (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017b). The people and organisations that are part of this system can thus be graphically depicted as a connected, multi-layered structure (Figure 1).

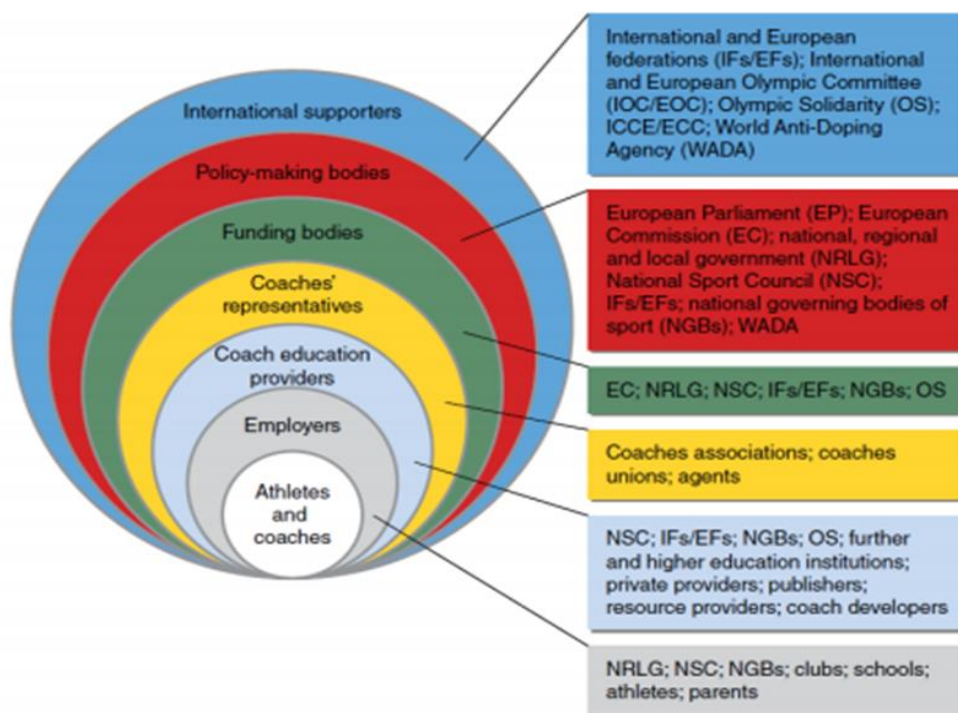


Figure 1. The Coaching System (reproduced from ESCF, Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a)

The existence of Coaches' Associations ensures that coaches, a fundamental stakeholder in the sporting landscape, are represented in the sectoral social dialogue that shapes the labour market. The status and recognition of the coach and of coaching as a profession have been shown to be higher and stronger in countries and sports with long-standing, well-organised and consolidated association (CoachNet, 2013). Coaches' Associations thus enhance the wellbeing, employability, security, education, mobility, and race and gender equality of the coaching workforce.

In this sense, important work has already been conducted through the CoachNet project (2013). CoachNet aimed to contribute to strengthening the organisation and governance of sport in Europe by promoting 'The Voice of the Coach' and enhancing the involvement of coaches in decision-making at all levels of sport. The project also looked into the different ways in which coaches and coaching are organised in the EU, specifically in relation to the representation of coaches by Coaches' Associations and their impact on good governance. Keeping this in mind, CoachForce21 leans on the findings from CoachNet as a way to determine the evolution of coach representation over the last decade.

1.3 CoachNet Findings

The CoachNet final report gives a detailed description of the project's findings. CoachNet discovered a diverse landscape in which the representation of coaches varied greatly from one Coaches' Associations to another. From countries and sports with no representation to a number of good practice examples made up from confederate models across sports, blended models across coaching categories and single and multi-sport models. This hinted towards what we now know to be true, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to the coaching system and coach representation.

The study concluded that there was a need for a more considered approach to the representation of coaches, and to their involvement in decision-making, and recommended the development of more coherent structures for the engagement of coaches in each sport and country. It also highlighted the importance of bringing the voice of the coach to the fore of the Social Dialogue as a wider commitment to good governance in the sport sector.

The study, however, cautioned against the realisation that coaches are individual decision-makers who operate in a wide variety of contexts, many of whom do not show a propensity for involvement in formal 'representative' structures. The need for alternative

methods to connect with and engage coaches was, therefore, identified. These methods included a more individualized approach, depending on coaching role and status; the use of more informal, tech-based communication to connect directly with coaches; and the involvement of national and international federations in activating resources to connect with their coaches.

Since the publication of this final report, the European Coaching Council (ECC, the EU arm of the International Council for Coaching Excellence, ICCE) has supported these recommendations and held regular meetings of European Coaches Associations. The conclusions from the most recent of these meetings (Cologne, 2014, Rome, 2015, Athens 2016, Vierumaki, 2017 and Athens 2020) are directly tied in with the objectives and outputs of CoachForce21. Specifically, these conclusions included:

- Gaining a deeper understanding of the make-up and needs of the diverse coaching workforce in the EU
- The development of comprehensive guidance in relation to the setting up and good governance of Coaches' Associations
- Creating modern and efficient ways to engage and activate the voice of the coach

Through its different intellectual outputs, CoachForce21 seeks to fulfil these objectives and improve the representation of the coaching workforce in the EU. This Coaches' Associations Map, along with the Coaching Landscape Baseline Report, will be useful to understand the current situation of the sport coaching workforce. It will provide a stepping stone to develop the guidelines and further recommendations towards improving coaching representation and the voice of the coach.

In sum, CoachNet confirmed the existence of a small number of coach representation agencies such as coaches' associations across the EU. It also brought to the fore their perceived low impact. It concluded that in its current guise, coaches are not adequately and sufficiently partaking in the Social Dialogue in the sport sector of which they are such an important pillar. As a result, the governance of sport organisations is missing a very important link.

1.4 Time to Take Stock

This study and report provide a current map of coach representation in the EU. It does so by collecting data from existing Coaches' Associations in EU countries and analysing their roles, types, missions, and visions as well as their impact on coaches. To gain a deeper understanding of the situation of sport coaching, the report considers qualitative information regarding the

presence of the voice of the coach in each country. The resulting conclusions provide valuable information as to what the progress has been by comparing it to the CoachNet findings and providing a new baseline for future research.

2. Developing a European Coaches Associations MAP

2.1. Methodology

The study used a mixed methodology comprising of an online expert survey and a series of semi-structured interviews with selected countries. The goal of the survey and interviews was not to identify every existing association in the EU but to gather data on the presence, role, and impact of these associations in each of the surveyed countries. With this data we hope to develop a comprehensive and up-to-date map of the state of Coaches' Associations in the EU.

2.1.1 Expert interviews

Semi-structured expert interviews were undertaken with sport representatives from 11 countries in Europe – Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom - who were identified via the European Commission's Expert Group on Human Resources Development in Sport (EC XG). The EC XG is one of two Expert Groups established under the EU Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020. Each member state is invited to send a representative to the Expert Group Meetings. These representatives can come from a range of backgrounds, including Ministries, Sport Organisations, or academic institutions. EC XG representatives either participated in the interview directly or referred the researchers to a colleague with additional expertise related to sport coaching.

Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and were conducted by five separate interviewers. Prior to the interview, the goal of the study was explained, and respondents were informed that their responses could be used in the context of this research report or other research activities. During the interviews, the interviewers were assisted by a fellow researcher noting relevant information or quotations. The use of a separate researcher to take notes was done to minimise the disruptions to the interview. No formal recording or transcription of the interviews took place. This was done in light of the inherent cost-benefit trade-offs in the recording and verbatim transcription of interviews. Recordings can create discomfort for interviewees and inhibit the openness of responses (Al-Yateem, 2012). And, given the mixed-methods nature of this research, it is possible to validate and triangulate results from interviews with other sources, therefore minimizing the need for actual transcription (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

A semi-structured interview guide was designed including questions and potential sub-questions related to the legal, structural, regulatory, and demographic situation of coaching in the respective countries. Prior to each interview, the interviewers reviewed literature and policy documents relating to the respective countries and shared the interview guide with the interviewees. These steps were undertaken in order to obtain as much information as possible before the interview and to allow for more time during the interview to deviate from topics present in the interview guide and facilitate a more in-depth exploration of relevant topics. The data and information used to create this report is taken from section 7 of the interview as it pertains specifically to Coaching Workforce Representation. The interview schedule can be found in appendix 2.

2.1.2 Expert survey

In addition to the interviews, an online expert survey was undertaken with sport representatives from a further six EU Member States - Belgium, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia - who were identified via the EC XG. For the purposes of this survey, the representative either answered the survey directly or referred the survey to a colleague with additional expertise related to sport coaching.

The survey instrument aimed to obtain information regarding the coaching workforce representation in the EU, and therefore was designed based on section 7 of the expert interview and on the key features and elements of the coaching system highlighted across policy documents and academic research. A link to the full survey instrument can be found in appendix 2.

2.2. Data quality

Throughout the report there are mentions to several issues regarding data quality. There are two main reasons for this. First, it appears that certain terms and concepts could have been misunderstood due to translation issues or to the different meaning ascribed to particular words in each country. Second, data collected through online surveys was taken at face value as follow up interviews were not possible.

In addition, despite the efforts of the project partners to obtain as many responses as possible, the absence of engagement from several countries may suggest that coaching representation is still not a priority topic for many.

3. Results and Discussion

For the purposes of this section, data from both methodologies is combined and aims to present a broad overview of the Coaches' Associations in Europe. Where relevant, this summary data is supplemented by quotes or other qualitative information extracted via the in-depth interviews.

Results are presented according to thematic, namely types of associations, role of said associations, their mission and vision, the visible impact these associations have and presence of the voice of the coach. An overview of responses provided per country is provided in appendix 3. For economy, referencing is avoided.

3.1 Types of Associations

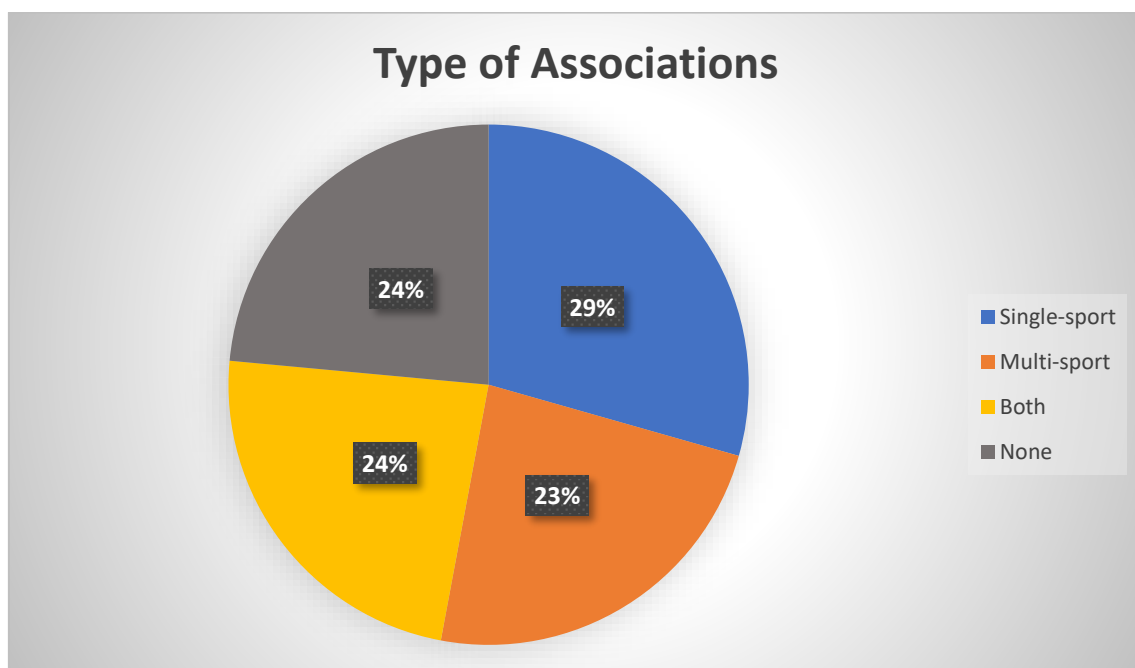


Figure 2. Summary of results related to the Type of Associations.

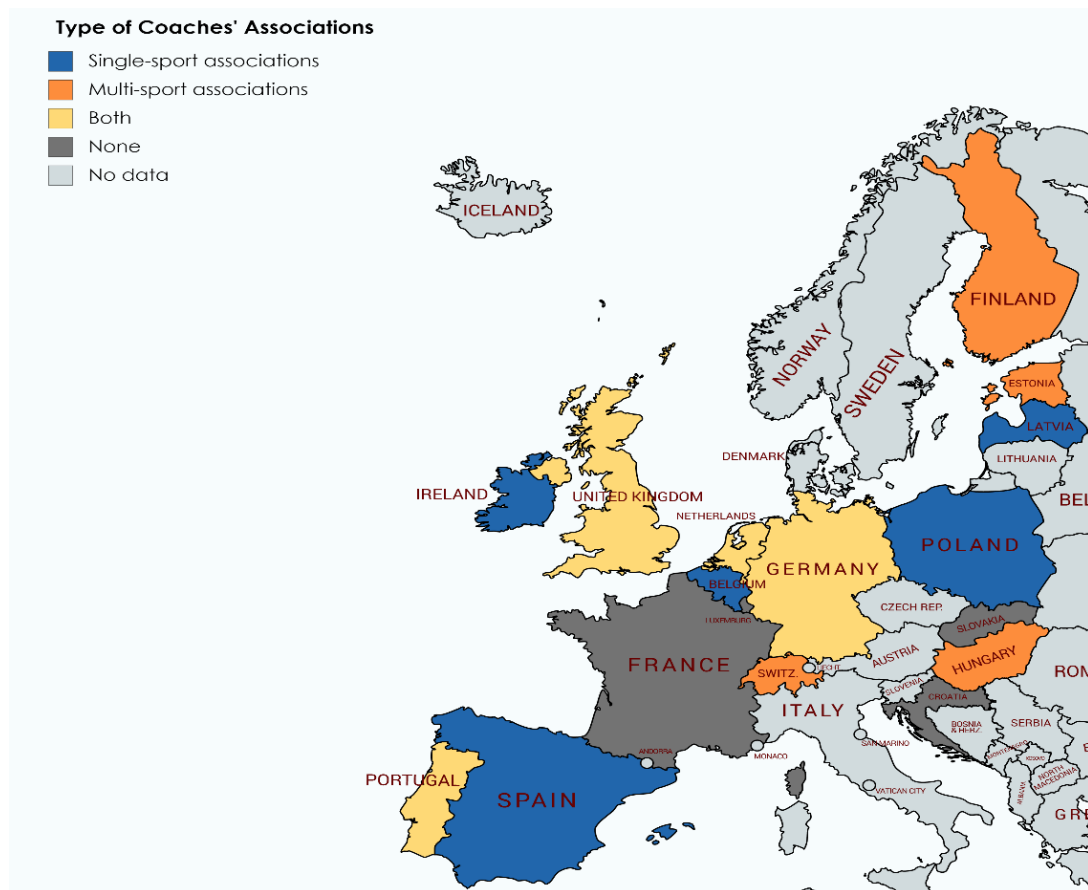


Figure 3. Map of results indicating the Type of Associations.

A majority of the surveyed countries in Europe (76%, n=13) have either single-sport associations, multi-sport associations or both. Out of the 17 countries, five have single-sport associations, four have multi-sport associations, and another four have both types of associations. Notably, countries who reported having both types of associations (24%) share a similar trend in which single-sport associations are “very small” and “may have been reduced in the past 8-10 years” (Interviewee 1).

When asked about the presence of coaching associations, 5 of the countries (29%) mentioned the presence of coaching unions. Given their specific response as a different type of organization than Coaches' Associations, these unions are not seen as a substitute of Coaches' Associations but as an added, professional organization typically supporting high-performance professional coaches. There is only one Coaches' Association where this does not seem to be so; the Coaching Union of Estonia represents qualified coaches and protects their rights and acts as a coach association would. Nevertheless, there seems to be a need to clearly define what associations are and how/if they are different from unions.

Moreover, only two of the respondents mentioned differences between amateur/volunteer coaches and high-performance/professional coaches. Interviewee 2 stated that in their Coaches' Associations their Coaches' Associations "provides support to about 15% of the 'more serious' workforce" whilst interviewee 3 stated that in their country there existed a specific association for professional coaches.

3.2 Role of Coaches' Associations

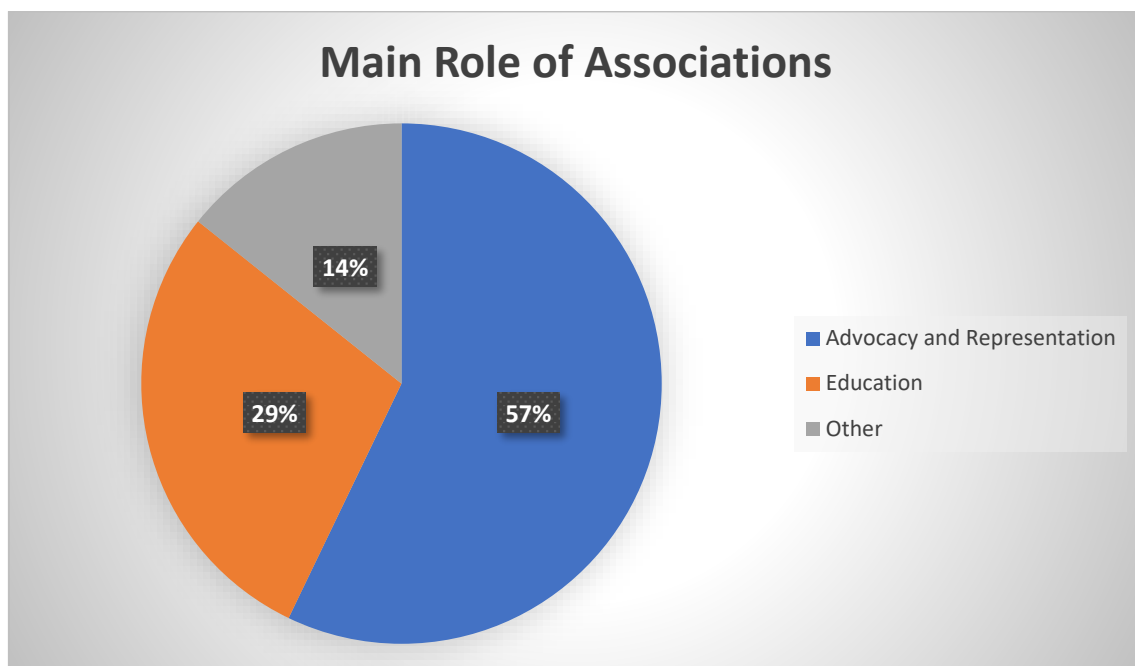


Figure 4. Summary of results related to the main Role of Associations.

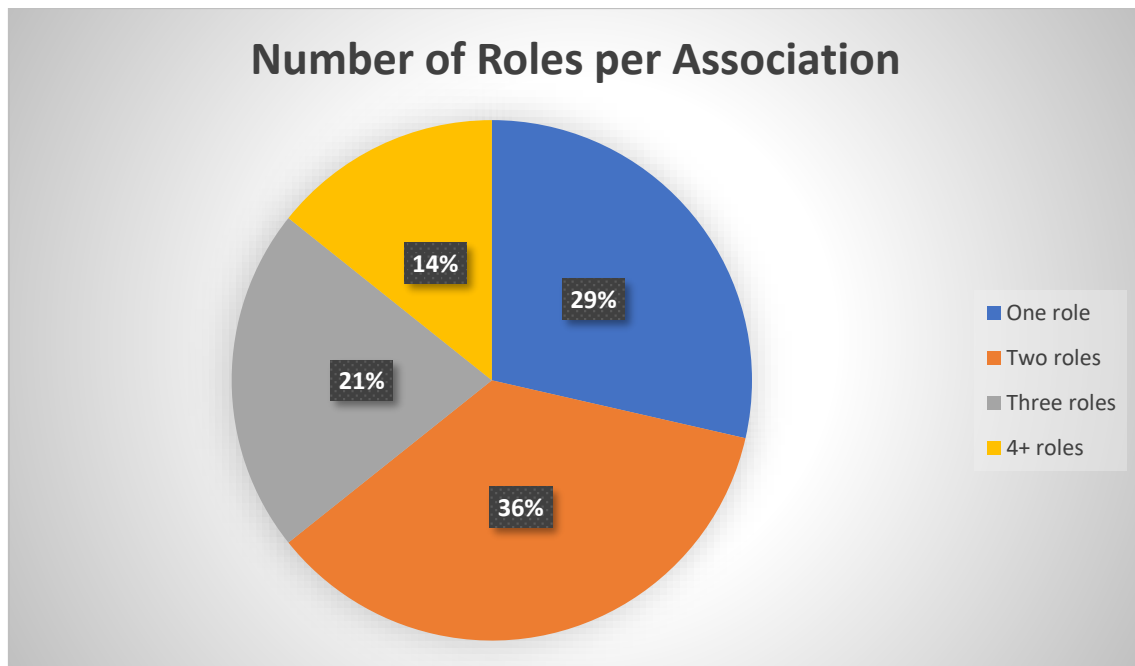


Figure 5. Number of roles per Association

The analysis of the data regarding the role of associations has been presented in two separate figures. Figure 4 takes into account the role considered as most important by the expert answering the survey. However, 10 of the respondents (71%) detailed multiple roles of the associations in their countries, with the most common combination being advocacy, representation, and education (50%). This is detailed in figure 4 by separating the Coaches' Associations by the number of roles stated in the surveys and interviews.

Advocacy and representation represent more than half (57%) of the main role of the surveyed countries. Associations represent coaches in front of a number of organizations, ranging from coaching committees in federations to Olympic Committees and Governments. This representation is considered in most Coaches' Associations to put the coaches within the social dialogue of their countries. Although a complete description of each Coaches' Association is difficult to assess, there does seem to be clearer defined roles in countries with multi-sport associations. For example, BVTDS (Germany) "fights for the social recognition of coaches and for an improvement in their work situation", Treinadores Portugal's mission is to "represent and defend the interests of coaches in front of public and private organisations" and SAVAL (Finland) "guides in matter of employment and engages in lobbying work on behalf of the profession".

Of the surveyed countries with Coaches' Associations, only one of the respondents states that the organization is not "overly active" and "it conducts little activities beyond [representation]" (Interviewee 4). However, this does not necessarily imply that the rest of the associations are indeed active. The issue might then be not whether Coaches' Associations are active or not, but whether their activity brings significant contributions to their coaches and much needed data to analyse their impact. Future research could also establish the membership base of these Coaches' Associations to determine their representativeness.

Notably, one of the respondents that stated not to have a CA in their country did however answer that their role was linked to education. This suggests either the presence of some sort of organization that can be mistaken with a coach association or a misunderstanding of the question.

3.3 Mission, vision and impact



Figure 6. Summary of results related to the mission, vision, and impact of associations.

With regards to the mission and vision of Coaches' Associations, results have been presented in a Word Cloud (Figure 6). This cloud has been created using the data from the interviews, which is summarized in Table 1 (below) and described in the following paragraphs.

Word	Times mentioned	Word	Times mentioned
Development	5	Advocacy	2
Recognition	4	Training	2
Support	4	Develop the sport	1
Employment	3	Develop standards	1
Education	3	Dissemination of knowledge	1
Representation	3	Create national register	1
Equality	3	Improve conditions	1
Profession	3	Increase safety	1
Licensing	3	Lifelong learning	1
Cooperation	2	Voice of the Coach	1

Table 1. Number of mentions related to mission, vision, and impact of associations.

Almost half of the associations (41%) mentioned development as part of their mission and vision. In contrast, only 17% stated education as one of their missions. However, if we broaden the concept of development and include education, recognition and improvement in social and working conditions, the number of associations whose mission includes this increases to 65%.

One association stated that it has been “fighting for social recognition and appreciation of coaches” while at the same time searching for “an improvement in their work situation” (Interviewee 5). Meanwhile, other associations are focused on “the training of sport coaches” (Interviewee 9), “educating future coaches and instructors” (Interviewee 10) and “skills and competences development” (Interviewee 6).

On top of focusing on present issues, 5 of the associations (29%) include in their mission and vision the development of the profession through the creation of a coaching register and/or developing professional standards. Nevertheless, due to the lack of clarity in some of the answers it is possible that more associations may also focus on these issues.

The impact that Coaches’ Associations have are tangible benefits that coaches obtain through the actions of these associations. When asked about their impact on coaches in their countries, only 7 (41%) of the countries were able to find or articulate these impacts. Furthermore, the answers that these 7 countries provided might not be considered impacts in some Coaches’ Associations, but rather goals, ambitions and institutional missions. This might however be due to difficulties in translating concepts and the similarities they have between them.

Of the countries that were not able to express these impacts, the reasons varied from “more financial support is needed” (Interviewee 8), “evidence is not available because association has been recently established” (Interviewee 7) and “there is no study to determine the impact”(Interviewee 5). This suggests that there are multiple possible reasons for the lack of impact, and it does not necessarily mean that there is not one.

3.4 The Voice of the Coach

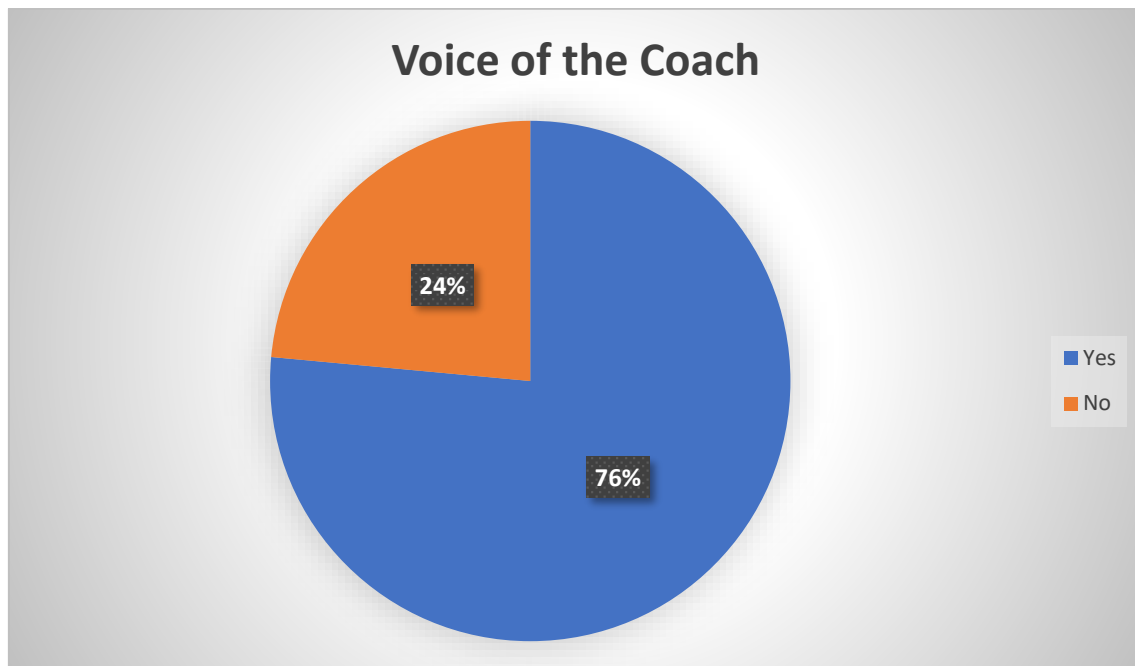


Figure 7. Summary of results related to presence of the Voice of the Coach.

Of the surveyed countries, 13 of them (76%) expressed that the Voice of the Coach is present and recognized, although answers vary in the quality and the means by which it is recognized. Five of these countries (29%) express that coaches only “partly have a voice”(Interviewee 7), that “only winning coaches are heard” (Interviewee 9), that there is a “lack of interest in coaches’ current affairs” (Interviewee 10) and that, despite the existence of associations, “coaches are insufficiently recognized”(Interviewee 8).

On the other hand, another seven countries (41%) reported having feedback mechanisms set in place (surveys, consultations, Q&A...) that allow coaches to express themselves and lets their voice be heard in front of government organizations through their CA. With the exception of two countries, those that have a clearer system in place for coach feedback are countries with the presence of multi-sport associations.

Furthermore, out of the 17 associations, seven of them (41%) stated they facilitated the Voice of the Coach to reach National Olympic Committees or government organizations through their actions and position.

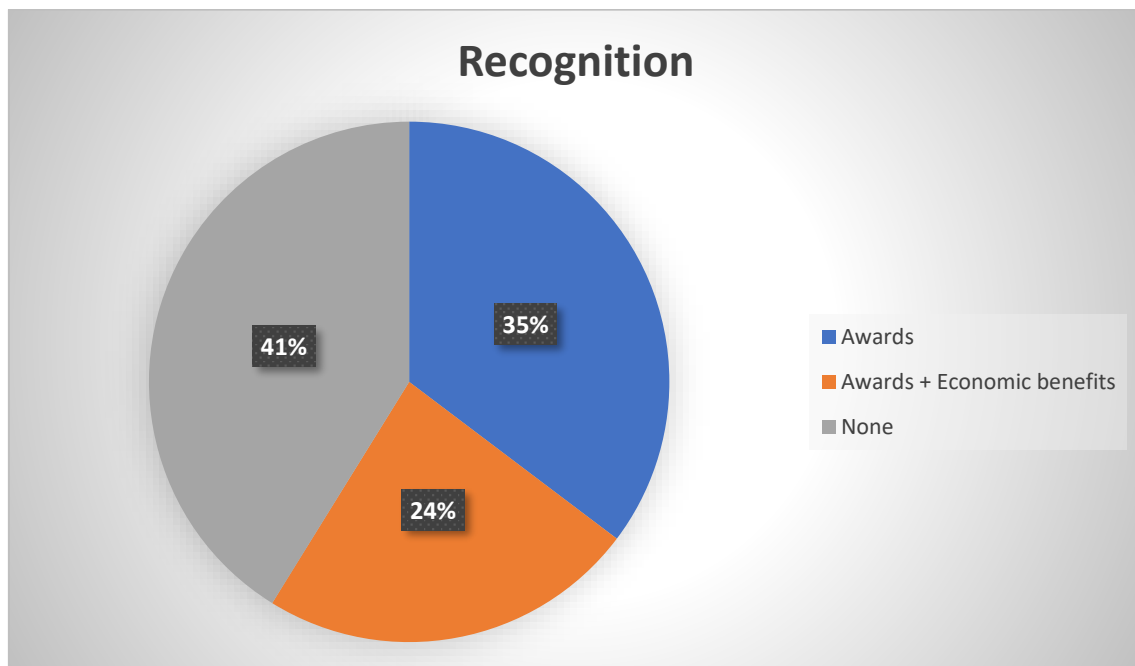


Figure 8. Summary of results related to the recognition and benefits for coaches.

More than half the countries (59%) have some sort of recognition program in place for coaches. All of these 10 countries have an awards system in place (coach of the year/month) and 4 of these have added economic benefits for coaches (i.e., tax exemptions). Further web-based research exemplifies this as “premiums and awards being excluded from taxation” and “coaching falls within the scope of VAT exemption for education”.

4. Conclusions

4.1 A mixed picture

This report offers an important and current perspective on the status of Coaches' Associations in Europe. Although the data collected is limited, there are some trends that can be compared to the 2013 CoachNet report. There is a clear majority of countries (76%) who have some type of coaching association. Countries range from no representation to confederate models, single-sport associations, multi-sport associations and a combination of both.

In terms of function, almost all of them (83%) are clear on what their role is towards coaches. Up to 71% of coaching associations are dedicated to advocacy, representation and education. This tends to be clearly defined in their different missions and visions and suggests a clear objective of helping coaches develop and improve and strengthen their position within the social dialogue of their countries.

Nonetheless, the actual impact on coaches and the coaches' perceptions of the value of Coaches' Associations requires further investigation. The interviews and surveys were not able to ascertain the impact of the associations in each country. Only 41% of surveyed experts were able to articulate impact, although in some Coaches' Associations, the answers were not clearly related to impact but to the Coaches' Associations goals and objectives.

In a similar way, 76% of the respondents expressed the Voice of the Coach is present in their countries, although each country differs in the actual strength of that voice and how they go about promoting it. While five countries reported the voice of the coach was weak and had little recognition, another five reported having mechanisms in place to make it heard.

With the exception of two countries with single-sport associations, all the countries with strong feedback mechanisms in place, such as surveys and consultations, have multi-sport associations present. This might indicate that countries with strong multi-sport associations are better prepared to receive feedback from coaches through several tools and programs which strengthen the Voice of the Coach.

4.2 Areas for Improvement

Despite the positive trend shown in this report, this report shows that the coaching workforce representation can be improved. The data indicates that this may be done in two ways: i) improvement in the quality of the representation and ii) enhancing the quality of the data collected by countries and associations to establish their real impact.

First of all, comparing section 7 to the rest of the in-depth interview there seems to be much less information on Coaches' Associations than on the rest of the coaching system. Whether this is due to lack of existing data or to lack of access by the expert completing the survey/interview the interviewee is difficult to assess. A combination of both mechanisms is plausible given the evidence shown in this report.

This is not to say that all countries have poor information on Coaches' Associations, as there have been interviews with vast amounts of data that have allowed the development of an accurate picture of the situation in that particular country. However, data collection around Coaches' Associations and their role and impact appears to be less valued than other types of data. Despite the efforts of the project partners to obtain responses, the absence of engagement from several countries suggests that coaching representation is less valued and developed than other elements of the coaching system.

Another important aspect to note is the apparent ambiguity and misinterpretation of some of the questions and concepts in the survey and interview. In-depth interviews allowed for immediate clarification, whereas the online surveys did not. Future research must pay more attention to establishing definitions and building a common interpretative framework.

4.3 Coaches' Associations Map

Although this report shows a map with some positive trends, there are still too many Coaches' Associations and countries in which coach representation appears insufficient. There still seem to be barriers which prevent the voice of the coach from reaching the decision-making level. Most likely this problem originates both at the ground level (i.e., coaches lack of disposition to be part of Coaches' Associations) and at the institutional level. Significant cooperation between associations and federations appears vital to eliminate these barriers.

Some countries, however, are able to provide accurate and valuable information. They also appear to be succeeding in improving coaching on the ground while at the same time bringing the Voice of the Coach to the fore of the social dialogue. This points towards a possible correlation between coach representation, coach improvement and data collection although further research is needed to confirm this.

While this is a positive trend, we do have to acknowledge that there are almost as many different Coaches' Associations as there are countries. There does not seem to be a one-size-fits-all solution, especially when considering the rest of the coaching system and structures. This is recognized at European Commission level and it is understood that each country sits within a specific cultural and historic context which shapes the scene for the sport coaching world and how coaches are represented and recognised.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be a positive trend in countries with strong, multi-sport coaching associations. Similar to the findings of CoachNet (2013), data seems to be more easily obtained from countries with a substantial sport coaching infrastructure in place. With few

exceptions, these countries seem to have a better grasp on what their goals are and how they go about them, as well as having more data and information about coaches and their associations.

4.4 Where to next?

Despite the overall positive picture emanating from the interviews and survey this report suggests that workforce representation is still lagging behind other elements of the coaching system. A significant issue is the lack of valid and reliable data to establish the impact and reach of the existing associations. Although each national sport system depends highly on cultural and historical background, a better-informed map of Coaches' Associations would provide countries with a more detailed information of positive trends and their outcomes in countries with a similar background.

With this in mind, the positive trends seen in this report should help push forward data collection and research on coaching workforce representation. While finding a unique solution for all is highly unlikely, it is possible to find trends that work in specific settings that might be worthwhile for many of the EU countries. Improved data collection will undoubtedly paint a better picture of what works, for whom and under what circumstances. This will allow the Voice of the Coach to be better represented through the member states of the EU.

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6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Survey

The full survey instrument can be found [here](#)

6.2 Appendix 2: Interview Script

Topic Title + Questions
Coaching Workforce Representation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type/level of coach representation is there in your country? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Single-sport coaches' association b. Multi-Sport coaches' association c. Unions 2. What role do Coaching Associations play in your country? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advocacy and Representation b. Legal Support c. Education d. Other? 3. How is the voice of the coach recognised in your country? (i.e., NGBs, Coaching agencies, NOC, Coaches' Associations?) 4. Do coaches really have a voice in your country? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do coaches get heard? b. What leverage do coaches have in your country? c. Is there a voice/representation gap? 5. What recognition/reward mechanisms are in place for coaches? (i.e., stipends, awards, tax exemptions, etc)

6.3 Appendix 3: Overview of Coaches' Associations Map

	Type of coach representation	Role of Coaches' Associations	Mission and vision	Visible impact	VotC recognized	How?	Leverage	Evidence	Recognition
Belgium	Yes, single-sport	Education	Development of skills and competencies. Lifelong learning.	No response	Through the Ministry of Sport	Formal and informal consultations	No response	No response	Financial sustainment and subsidies.
Croatia	No	Education	No response	No response	Through sport clubs	Nothing in particular	No response	No response	State award for sport workers with top-level achievements
Estonia	Yes, multi-sport	Protect rights, representation	No response	Little to no activity	Through the coaching union	At the NOC congress	No response	No response	No response
Finland	Yes, multi-sport	Improve conditions and employment, education	No response	No response	Yes, through Coaches' Associations and coaching panels	Survey several times a year	No response	No response	Coach of the month, coach of the year
France	No	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Germany	Both	Advocacy, representation, legal support, education, social recognition	No response	No response	DOSB projects and Coaches' Associations	Internal projects to strengthen the Voice of the Coach	Low	None	Coaching awards, bonuses
Hungary	Yes, multi-sport	Advocacy and representation	Increasing recognition, improving	General improvement (elite coaches)	HCA, coaches committees within NGBs	No response	No response	None	Awards, reduced tax, scholarships

			situation, dissemination of knowledge, creating a national register	are state-funded), CPD, CA is advisory to the government, develop register					
Ireland	Yes, single-sport	Representation, advocacy, legal support	No response	No response	Through NGBs	Feedback from employers, feedback in coach education/CPD, surveys	No response	Very little	Some Coaches' Associations have awards
Latvia	Yes, single-sport	Advocacy and representation	Development of the professional field, coordinate CPD	None, too recent	Coaches' Associations	Partly	High	Salary increase after a strike	Coach of the year award
Luxembourg	No	No response	No response	No response	No	No. Coaches handle their problems on their own	No response	No response	None
Netherlands	Both. Single-sport are small. Multi-sport: NLCoach	Education	No response	NLCoach Congress, courses recognized by NGBs	NOC, federations	Elite through NOC. Other: survey every 2 years. Annual congress by some NGBs	Big voice/representation gap	No response	No response
Poland	Yes, single-sport	Education, licensing	Education, develop standards, contribute to increase the level of sport	Education, licenses, congresses, publicity campaigns	Ministry of Sport, Polish Sport Council, Coaches' Associations	Hardly considered	Low	None	Awards for elite coaches
Portugal	Both	Advocacy and representation, legal support, education	No response	No response	Coaches' Associations	TP has a seat in the Sports Council	Impact on society. TP trying to reduce the gap by making individual coaches	No response	Awards, tax exemptions

							feel represented, promoting social recognition		
Slovakia	No	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Spain	Yes, single-sport	Advocacy and representation	Training for those who assume leadership, advise on the new labor framework for coaches	No response	Sport Federations and Private Coaches' Associations	Representative in the assemblies of NGBs	Low	No response	No response
UK	Both	Advice, support and education	No response	No response	UK Coaching	UK Coaching week, increased recognition and awareness	No response	No response	Awards, paid employment
Switzerland	Yes, multi-sport	Advisory to other NGBs	Advises on professional, economic and social issues	No response	Insufficiently recognized	No response	No response	No response	Awards

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